



4-H Healthy Living: Physical Activity

Mission of 4-H:

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change.

The Challenge:

Moderate physical activity reduces the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, stress and high blood pressure. In addition, physically active people generally live longer and enjoy a better quality of life than inactive people. Children and youth should engage in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, ideally, every day, but studies show a significant decrease in the amount of physical activity between elementary school and high school students, especially for girls.

The Solution:

Through 4-H Healthy Living strategies and programming, youth will...

- Obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their physical activity practices
- Gain knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations to increase physical activity practices.
- Understand the importance of being more physically active together.
- Identify safe places in their community where they can be physically active.
- Adopt new or improved habits and behaviors related to physical activity practices, engage in regular physical activity, and maintain physical activity at recommended levels.
- Reduce the likelihood of being overweight or obese and increase physical stamina.
- Decrease the risk for serious disease, illness, and physical/emotional distress.

The Partnerships – The following examples show how partnerships contribute to the work of 4-H Healthy Living goals:

- **Child Obesity 180:** [ChildObesity180](#) is a collaboration of a unique group of national leaders that addresses childhood obesity by combining rigorous research and evaluation, innovative strategies, multi-sector collaboration, and eventual widespread promulgation of evidence-based practices through four initiatives.
- **Let's Move, White House:** [Let's Move!](#) is a comprehensive initiative, launched by the First Lady, dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams.

The Results:

- With support from the Walmart Foundation the [4-H Youth Voice: Youth Choice](#) program has reached nearly 75,000 at-risk youth and their families with interactive education about physical activity. Reports indicate that 89 percent of the elementary school-aged participants believe that being active is fun. About 80 percent of these youth report engaging in moderate activity daily, and 92 percent understand that being active is good for them.
- With support from National 4-H Council, Michigan State University 4-H developed a curriculum to help teens improve their physical activity and overall health. [STEPS to a Healthy Teen](#) provides a variety of learning methods and tools, such as games, case scenarios, computer software programs, cooking demonstrations, and fitness challenges.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is the youth outreach program from the land-grant institutions' Cooperative Extension Services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development. 4-H National Headquarters is housed within the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Additional support for 4-H programming is provided through National 4-H Council. For more information email 4Hhq@nifa.usda.gov.